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AGREEMENT IN RIYADH

ANNCR: V.O.A. NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES THE AGREEMENT ON LEBANON REACHED AT A MEETING OF ARAB LEADERS IN RIYADH, THE CAPITAL OF SAUDI ARABIA:

VOICE: THERE HAVE BEEN DOZENS OF ATTEMPTS TO END THE WAR IN LEBANON, AND NONE OF THEM HAS WORKED. SO, THE NEWS THAT ARAB LEADERS HAVE COME UP WITH A NEW FORMULA MAY WELL BE GREETED IN SOME QUARTERS WITH SKEPTICISM. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE OPINION OF MOST INFORMED OBSERVERS, THE AGREEMENT REACHED MONDAY AT RIYADH HAS A BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING THAN ANY OF ITS PREDECESSORS. IN FACT, THERE IS A WIDESPREAD FEELING OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT A LEBANESE SETTLEMENT MAY FINALLY BE IN SIGHT.

AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS, THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT PROVIDE FOR A CEASEFIRE TO BEGIN THURSDAY, AND THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE ARAB LEAGUE'S PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO INSURE THAT THE FIGHTING DOES NOT START UP AGAIN. ALL PARTIES GUARANTEE THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON, AND AGREE THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY. THE PALESTINIAN ARABS PROMISE NOT TO INTERFERE IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS, AND TO ABIDE BY THE TERMS OF THE NINETEEN SIXTY-NINE CAIRO AGREEMENT, WHICH RESTRICTS THEIR MOVEMENTS. THE ARAB STATES, FOR THEIR PART, RECOGNIZE THE P.L.O. AS THE LEGITIMATE LEADERSHIP OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND SPECIFY THAT THEY WILL NOT INTERFERE IN PALESTINIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE AGREEMENT IS TO BE RATIFIED BY AN ARAB SUMMIT MEETING NEXT WEEK.

UNQUESTIONABLY, THERE ARE CERTAIN OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES WHICH MUST BE OVERCOME IF THIS FORMULA IS TO WORK. CHIEF AMONG THESE IS THE NEED FOR THE LEADERS OF THE LEBANESE WARRING FACTIONS TO AGREE TO STOP FIGHTING -- AND TO ENDORSE THE TERMS OF THE

RIYADH FORMULA. QUESTIONS ARE ALSO LIKELY TO BE RAISED ABOUT THE FUTURE ROLE OF SYRIA AND THE SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON -- AS WELL AS ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE ENLARGED PEACEKEEPING FORCE AND ITS ABILITY TO ENFORCE THE CEASEFIRE. AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST THE BASIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF LEBANON -- THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM AND BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT ABOUT THE CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY -- MUST BE SOLVED.

NEVERTHELESS, MOST OBSERVERS ARE CONVINCED THAT IF THE CEASEFIRE ITSELF IS SUCCESSFUL, THERE WILL BE TIME AND LATITUDE TO WORK OUT THE OTHER PROBLEMS. FURTHERMORE, THEY BELIEVE THAT MOST LEBANESE -- AND THE PALESTINIAN ARABS IN LEBANON -- ARE THOROUGHLY TIRED OF THE WAR, AND READY TO ACCEPT COMPROMISES WHICH WILL LEAD TO A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT. FINALLY, THERE IS GROWING AWARENESS IN THE ARAB WORLD -- AND ELSEWHERE -- THAT THE LEBANESE WAR, AND THE DIVISIVENESS IT HAS CAUSED, IS A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THE RENEWAL OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS THAT COULD LEAD TO A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. THE RIYADH AGREEMENT COULD BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD REMOVAL OF THAT OBSTACLE.

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